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THE DEVELOPMENT OF GERMANY AS A WORLD POWER

Introductory Address by
HON. CHARLEMAGNE TOWER
Former Ambassador of the United States to Germany

Address by
COUNT J. H. VON BERNSTORFF
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Germany to the
United States

Session of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,
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INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

BY HON. CHARLEMAGNE TOWER, LL.D.,
Former Ambassador from the United States to Germany.

We are to have the privilege of listening this evening to an address upon "Germany as a World Power," by a gentleman whose intimate acquaintance with the subject and whose long and distinguished services to the Empire enable him to speak with great authority.

One of the most remarkable and interesting national developments of our time is the growth of Germany, her wonderful increase in power and her advancement to the position of influence which she holds at present in the family of nations, the great World Power which we know to-day having been built up within considerably less than a hundred years.

At the close of the Napoleonic period, Germany found itself exhausted, its people impoverished and its industries crippled by the devastation of war; a country in so sad a condition that it required courageous men to face the future. She was happy enough to have amongst her sons not only courageous men, but statesmen of wisdom who understood their native land and who saw that the hope of the country lay in the combined efforts of all; that strength was to be created by united interests, that when Germany could be united Germany would be great. To this they devoted themselves throughout the nineteenth century.

At the end of the Franco-Prussian War the constitution was adopted, in the year 1871, under which all the states of Germany united to form, as it declares, "an eternal union for the protection of the realm and the care and welfare of the German people."

The German Empire is, therefore, a federal government, a union of sovereign and independent states like our own, each separate state having its own legislature and the control of its own internal affairs, just as our states have. At the head of the federal government is the King of Prussia, who bears in this connection the title of German Emperor; he is said by the constitution to represent the Empire internationally, he is vested with supreme con-

trol of the military and naval organizations of the Empire and directs its foreign affairs; he can declare war if it is defensive and can make peace; he makes treaties with other nations and appoints and receives ambassadors.

Under this constitutional government there are twenty-five federal states, which include the whole of Germany. Their legislative authority is vested in the Reichstag, the House of Representatives, to which members are elected by universal suffrage throughout the Empire, and a chamber called the Bundesrat, the Federal Council, the members of which are appointed by the individual states. All laws of the Empire must receive the votes of an absolute majority of the Bundesrat and the Reichstag, after which they must be promulgated by the Emperor. But the Emperor has no right of veto on laws passed by these two bodies.

The growth of the country has been exceedingly rapid, especially during the last half century, and the population, which at the close of the wars of Napoleon amounted to some twenty-five millions, is now over sixty millions. Its towns and cities have advanced also in size and importance. They often astonish the traveler who has not seen them for a period of years. For instance, any one who knew Berlin at the time of the Franco-Prussian War thinks of it as a village as compared with the great capital of the Empire to-day, well governed, well ordered, with two millions of people and increasing at the rate of thirty thousand a year.

Education is compulsory, schools of all kinds are maintained everywhere, besides twenty-one large universities, whose doors, I may say in passing, have been most generously held open to thousands of our own American students who have gone there seeking instruction. Indeed I take pleasure in bearing witness to the great kindness and courtesy shown to all Americans, either resident or traveling in Germany, during my mission there, for I never knew of an American who was refused a privilege for which he had any right to ask.

By the application of modern science to manufacturing industries, Germany has greatly increased her domestic resources in so remarkable a way that in a country which has been poor heretofore there are now evidences of wealth on all sides. If you take the condition of the ordinary man of even twenty years ago, what he had and what he was, and then take the condition of a man of the

same class to-day, there is scarcely a comparison between them; thrift and industry and the extraordinary aptitude for thoroughness which is characteristic of the German, have so increased the manufacturing production of the empire that it not only supplies the demand at home, but seeks outlets for itself in all the markets of the world; her merchants and commercial agents represent her at all important centers of the globe and her commerce, carried by the two great steamship lines, the North German Lloyd and the Hamburg-American lines, comes not only to our own shores, but penetrates into South America, through the Mediterranean to the remotest parts of the Orient, into China, India and Japan, and it is probably more in connection with this than with anything else that Germany makes her influence felt as a world power to-day. This is of great moment, for, all things considered, it seems to me that this widely growing commerce is the most important interest of the nation. I am inclined to look upon it, taken with her army and her navy, as the greatest guarantee of peace; for, a war with any great power, in addition to the sacrifices that war is bound to entail to-day, would be likely to strike a disastrous blow at the prosperity of the whole German people, a grave responsibility for any statesman to assume. In a practical sense it may be said with absolute truth that Germany is dependent upon peace, and for her natural and proper development she requires peace.

One of the strongest influences in German life is that of the Emperor himself, for his personality lends character to every progressive movement that is made. He is a very great statesman, whose genial temper and kind nature invariably charm those who come into personal contact with him, whilst his visitors are frequently astonished by the breadth of view and profound knowledge that he possesses in regard to almost every subject of discussion. His one ambition is the advancement of Germany, and no sovereign could be more sincerely devoted to the welfare and happiness of his whole people.

It is gratifying to refer to the friendship which he has always expressed for our country and for our people as a nation. He sent his brother to visit us at a time and in a manner which showed as great respect for us as it is possible for one government to express to another; he has invited our American professors to lecture in the German universities upon American culture and ideals, and he

has appointed some of the German professors to come and lecture to our students in our universities upon the progress of German thought.

We are honored by the presence this evening of the Emperor's diplomatic representative, and I take great pleasure in presenting to you His Excellency Count von Bernstorff, Imperial German Ambassador.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GERMANY AS A WORLD POWER

BY COUNT J. H. VON BERNSTORFF,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Germany to the United
States.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I esteem it a happy privilege to have been able to avail myself of the kind invitation of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. It is very great pleasure and honor for me to meet so many prominent men, who have done so much to promote science, knowledge and culture in this great country and all over the world. I am exceedingly flattered, that so many charming ladies have condescended to come and listen to the few words I have been asked to say on the subject of "Germany as a World Power."

Some months ago I read a very interesting book, which was written and given to me by my friend Mr. Archibald Cary Coolidge of Harvard University, and which deals with the subject of "The United States as a World Power." In the introduction Mr. Coolidge explains, that the expression "world power" is a political commonplace, but that the term is lacking in exactness, which, however, seems rather natural, as it conveys a conception of very recent origin. The author defines the term "world power" as meaning "powers which are directly interested in all parts of the world and whose voices must be listened to everywhere."

I think we can accept this definition and need not argue with Mr. Coolidge, if he further names five states as having a claim beyond question to the title of world powers. Be this as it may, we all seem to agree with Mr. Coolidge, that Germany has such a claim, or you would otherwise not have asked me to speak on this subject. Of the five world powers named by Mr. Coolidge, Germany and the United States are decidedly the two youngest. January 18, 1871, was the birthday of modern Germany. Before this day, on which the empire was newly founded, Germany had been granulated into many small political units by the vicissitudes of an eventful history.

I may leave it to my kind audience to decide since when the United States ranks among the world powers.

Germany with only a little over a million and a quarter of square miles stands far below the other world powers in area, but her white population—which to my mind is the only one we can seriously take into consideration this evening—is about 65 millions and therefore superior to that of the British Empire or greater France.

In speaking of Germany as a world power I am obliged to begin by saying that our world policy has often been intentionally or unintentionally misrepresented abroad and this particularly because foreign authors and journalists have taken or pretended to take seriously the flights of fancy of the so-called Pangermanists, who are of no importance at all. They have hardly any representatives in our parliament and not the slightest influence on the government. By the latter the Pangermanists are even considered a very undesirable element of German journalism, because they stir up ill feeling abroad against Germany by putting forth questions and aims which are quite beyond the scope of practical politics. Even Mr. Coolidge, whose book is written in a very impartial and friendly spirit for Germany, believes "that the Pangermanists express freely the extreme of ambitions which many quieter patriots cherish in some degree." This erroneous assumption leads him further to believe that the interests of Germany and the United States might some day clash and this without the fault of anyone. Here I must again differ with Mr. Coolidge. In the quite improbable case that a clash should ever occur between Germany and the United States, this would in my opinion be the result either of a foolish policy or of an outburst of unbridled popular jingoism.

Mr. Coolidge thinks the chief source of difficulty between Germany and the United States may be found in the Monroe Doctrine, in regard to which the Americans will hear of no argument or compromise and are prepared to maintain their position at any cost. We in Germany are well aware of these facts, but there is not the slightest intention on our part to get a territorial foothold in the Western Hemisphere.

The other reason which makes Mr. Coolidge believe that the interests of Germany and the United States might some day clash is in his opinion to be found in the fact that the two nations are trade rivals, whose competition is keen.

No doubt all great manufacturing states of the world are to-day eager to find foreign markets for their surplus goods—markets in which manufactures can be exchanged for food—the products of industry for the products of the soil.

Trade rivalry should, however, never be a sufficient reason for political antagonism or animosity between nations, which would only be justified if the commerce of the world had now reached its utmost limits and if the great manufacturing countries were engaged in a life and death struggle for commercial supremacy. No such conditions exist. The trade of the world is now only a fraction of what it will be in years to come. As the years go on, Germany and the United States will increase indefinitely their production and their consumption, their foreign purchases and their foreign sales. Some nation may lead in foreign business, but the one thing certain is that there will be business for all, and that a fair share will fall to those who strive for it fairly and actively. There is no need among nations and individuals to regard trade rivals as enemies. The only rivalry is in brain, energy and resource. In China, South America, Africa and other parts of the world there are still such vast possibilities for trade expansion that there is room enough in the world for all manufacturing nations, who ought never to forget that in our days the wealth and prosperity of a nation depend not on the poverty but on the wealth and prosperity of other nations.

Take for instance the trade relations between England and Germany. There are many people in England who grumble that German energy has in recent years been so successfully exercised in that sphere of industrial and commercial enterprise which Englishmen have been accustomed to regard as peculiarly their own, but they quite forget that our export trade has created a great prosperity in Germany, by which England benefits just as well as Germany, because we have become Great Britain's best customers. More English goods are sold in the German market than in any other country or even British colony, with the exception of India. A similar exchange of goods is steadily increasing between Germany and the United States, and I therefore see no reason why these two great nations should not compete without jealousy in opening the Far East and other parts of the world to commerce and western civilization.

I purposely mentioned the Monroe Doctrine first, and then

spoke of the trade rivalry existing between Germany and the United States, because the latter leads me to my chief subject. Without overtaking the patience of my kind audience, I should like to explain to you, ladies and gentlemen, as clearly as I can, that the world policy of the German Empire is purely commercial and without any territorial ambitions or deep-seated designs against other states and the existing balance of power in the world. We do not strive to acquire further colonies by a redistribution of the colonial empire, and we are quite content to develop the resources of those colonies we have. It is therefore no part of my purpose to speak this evening of our colonial policy. However, what we do seek for is foreign trade, and for this reason we are staunch supporters of the theory of the "open door," which is also firmly upheld by the United States. Only a few months ago, when the United States took a new departure in Chinese affairs, we were the first to side with the United States, and to prove that we are always ready to adhere to the principle of the "open door," even if we have to sacrifice some temporary advantages. The foreign policy of the German Empire in the last years, which has often been criticised abroad, is easily understood, if we remember that the theory of the "open door" is the guiding principle of the German foreign policy. This idea prompted our action in Turkey, China, Morocco and also in South America, whenever we had any dealings with South American republics. Territorial expansion was never the motive.

The development of our navy is carried on in the same idea and on the same principle. The enormous increase of our industrial production and trade compelled us to take measures for the security of our over-sea interests. In the course of a single generation Germany, as an industrial and mercantile state, has worked its way into the second position in Europe; to-day England alone is ahead of it, yet by no great distance, and the distance decreases every year. The necessity of protecting this position by a strong naval force has therefore during recent decades become a dominant factor in the political thought of the German nation. We are now obliged to have a navy in proportion to our foreign trade and mercantile marine, for the sake of protecting these important departments of our national enterprise, but we do not desire to "rule the waves," and the development of our navy need therefore not be regarded with suspicion by anybody.

Impartial students of Germany's position will find themselves confronted by economic facts which alone sufficiently explain why Germany has to turn its attention to the expansion of its influence abroad. Since the birth of the modern German empire twenty-five millions have been added to its inhabitants. At the present time the annual increase is nearly a million. The question which these facts raise is primarily economic: how will this large population be employed; how will it live? Our land and climate, under the conditions that will continue as far as one can foresee, allow of the production of corn for some forty million people. Hence it will soon be necessary to buy bread from abroad to the extent of nearly one-half. How will this bread be paid for? Whoever buys from abroad must give back in return either money or goods. But we do not possess a single commodity which we can produce in such quantity that it can be an equivalent for the foreign bread. We have neither precious metals in any great abundance nor valuable plants, nor coal, iron or ores in superfluity. Not only so, but we manufacture in adequate quantities hardly any of the raw materials necessary for our industries at home. We import iron, copper, wool and flax; we do not possess a single fiber of cotton or silk, not to speak of less needful stuffs.

The only way to purchase food for those for whom none is produced at home is by importing raw materials from abroad, manufacturing them, multiplying their value by the process and then paying other nations who need our products with this increased value which our labor has given to the original material, or with the produce of capital created in Germany and invested abroad. If that is so, then for us all questions of foreign politics must be viewed from the standpoint of the creation and maintenance of markets abroad, and especially in trans-oceanic countries. I cannot but think that if this fundamental fact of Germany's enormous annual increase of population were intelligently grasped much of the unfortunate polemic to which my country's industrial expansion still gives rise in certain quarters would be moderated. If the German foreign policy continues to be determined according to the requirements of trade and industry, and if at the same time our social legislation, which guarantees the physical health of our industrial population, is further developed, Germany will, for a long time to come, have room not only for its existing population but for the yearly increase of a million inhabitants.

At the present time the population of the empire averages only 300 persons to the square mile, while that of the two most industrial countries of Europe, England and Belgium, exceeds 600. Even in Germany there are states which, without showing any signs of congestion, maintain a far greater ratio of population than the empire as a whole. Saxony has 780 inhabitants to the square mile and even in Prussia, whose ratio is only 278, the province of Rhineland has a density of 620 inhabitants to the square mile, and the province of Westphalia one of 465. Between a present national ratio of three hundred persons per square mile and the ratio of Saxony, Rhineland and Westphalia there is a difference which represents a population of some forty millions, and within that limit there is clearly a very considerable capacity for expansion. This expansion can, however, only be on industrial and not on agricultural lines. There is no reason to believe that the corn-growing capacity of Germany is as yet exhausted, yet it is a fact, which points its own moral, that in spite of the careful protection of the agricultural industry, the production of food corn, while it increases absolutely, has ceased to keep pace with the growth of population. The best that can be hoped is therefore that for a time corn growing will hold its own. It has indeed been estimated that there are ten millions of acres of moorland and other waste land which could be brought under cultivation and which would provide holdings of twenty-five acres for 400,000 families, but the aggregate population so represented is only equal to two years' increase.

There remains the alternative of emigration. Here, however, Germany is handicapped by the fact that owing to its late appearance in the field as a colonial power the German colonies with the one exception of southwest Africa are unsuited to settlement by Europeans. We have, however, as I mentioned before, resigned ourselves in all clearness and calm to the fact that there is no more possibility of acquiring colonies suitable for emigration. But if we cannot have such colonies it by no means follows that we cannot obtain the advantages, if only to a limited extent, which make these colonies desirable. It is a mistake to regard the mere possession of extensive trans-oceanic territories, even when they are able to absorb a part of the national surplus of population as necessarily a direct increase of power. Colonies do not increase the power of

the mother country because they are its possessions, nor yet because a few millions of its emigrants with their descendants live in them, but because by the trade with them the wealth and with it the defensive strength of the mother country are increased. Colonies which do not produce that result are of little value, and countries which possess this importance for a nation, even though they are not its colonies, are in this decisive point a substitute for colonial possessions in the ordinary sense. Moreover in our days we notice symptoms in all great colonies and dependencies which seem to prove that the era of colonial expansion is past. In nearly all colonies and dependencies we notice a growing spirit of independence which must some day lead from self-government to political independence. The mother countries will then have no economical advantages over other states except those afforded by the bonds of common language, civilization and traditions.

Of late the emigration figure in Germany has been very low, amounting to an average of 30,000 during the past six years, which proves that the social and economic conditions in Germany are perfectly satisfactory.

American public opinion takes particular interest in the German emigration to Brazil, because mischief makers like to pretend that the German settlers in that country have political designs and may one day induce us to ignore the Monroe Doctrine in trying to found a colonial empire in South America. According to a recent estimate the Germans now resident in Brazil number some 400,000, the great majority being settled in the southern states of Rio Grande do Sul, Parana and Santa Catharina, while a small number is found in Sao Paulo and Espirito Santo in the north. This population is for the most part the result of natural increase, for of late years emigration thither has greatly declined. Twenty years ago the yearly average was some 2,500; of late years it has fallen below a third of that number owing to the great decrease in the general stream of emigration. You will all agree, ladies and gentlemen, that this does not look as if we intended to found a colonial empire in South America. The Germans in Brazil strive as far as possible to keep up their beautiful old national culture and to maintain trade relations with their old home, but in doing so they benefit the land of their birth and their adopted country in the same way as this is the case on the part of the American citizens of German origin. Since I

have had the honor and pleasure of living in this great country I have never heard Americans speak in any other but a highly appreciative way of the good work done in this country by the German immigrants, who in maintaining the essential traits of the strenuous German character and their poetic and artistic feeling have largely helped to make this great country what it is and to shape the character of the American nation. There is no reason to assume that the German emigrants to Brazil will not have the same good influence in developing the resources of their adopted country and in shaping the character of the Brazilian nation. If they at the same time keep up an exchange of ideas and goods with their old home they will deserve the same praise as the American citizens of German origin, who now form a link of an ever-increasing friendship between Germany and the United States.

In these modern days there is no better way to bring about amity between people than to bind them by commercial ties which shall be to the advantage of both.

I hope, ladies and gentlemen, that you will not think that I have encroached on your patience, and for fear of doing so I will now close my address by thanking you for your kind attention and the splendid reception I received this evening.